

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LAGOS 03104 111843Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 W
-----077709 111856Z /66
P 111455Z MAR 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7086

S E C R E T LAGOS 3104

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJECT: BRIEFING PAPERS FOR PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO NIGERIA

REF: EASUM/SMITH LETTER OF DECEMBER 12, 1977

1. THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR COMMENTS ON THE POLITICAL AND
MILITARY BRIEFING PAPERS PREPARED FOR THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT
AS REVIEWED BY THE AMBASSADOR'S LETTER OF DECEMBER 12, 1977 TO
THOMAS SMITH, AF/W

2. AFRICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS NIGERIA: NO CHANGE.

3. THE DYNAMICS OF INTERNAL NIGERIAN POLITICS: THE LAST
PHRASE IN THIS PAPER SHOULD BE REVISED TO READ: 'PARTI-
CULARLY WHEN OPEN POLITICAL ACTIVITY BEGINS LATER IN 1978'

4. NIGERIA: MOVEMENT TOWARDS CIVILIAN RULE: THE FIRST
TWO PARAGRAPHS OF THIS PAPER ARE FINE. WE RECOMMEND
REWRITING STARTING WITH PARAGRAPH THREE AS FOLLOWS:
THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS MOVING IN DELIBERATE STAGES
TOWARDS A HANDOVER OF POWER TO CIVILIANS UNDER A PROGRAM
ANNOUNCED IN 1975. THE NUMBER OF STATES HAS BEEN INCREASED
FROM 12 TO 19 IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE BETTER POLITICAL
BALANCE AMONG REGIONAL AND ETHNIC INTERESTS. THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT SYSTEM HAS BEEN REVISED IN ORDER TO DILUTE
THE POWER OF THE TRADITIONAL RULERS AND PROVIDE A MORE
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DEMOCRATIC THIRD TIER OF GOVERNMENT.

A PROPOSED CONSTITUTION IS NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY
AN INDIRECTLY ELECTED CIVILIAN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. IT
IS EXPECTED TO ADOPT A FINAL DOCUMENT NOT LATER THAN
OCTOBER 1978, BUT IS TRYING TO COMPLETE ITS TASK BY THIS
SUMMER.

THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION IS MODELED HEAVILY ON THAT

OF THE U.S. IT PROVIDES FOR A STRONG FEDERAL SYSTEM WITH POPULARLY ELECTED PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT, A BICAMERAL LEGISLATURE WITH EACH STATE HAVING EQUAL REPRESENTATION IN THE SENATE AND MEMBERSHIP BASED ON POPULATION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY. IT ALSO CALLS FOR ELECTED STATE GOVERNORS AND ASSEMBLIES, CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY, AND NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES IN PLACE OF REGIONAL ONE'S THAT FUELED PAST ETHNIC STRAINS.

DURING ITS SESSIONS THE ASSEMBLY HAS CONCENTRATED ON RESTRAINING THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT AND PROVIDING EQUAL REPRESENTATION FOR VARIOUS ETHNIC GROUPS AS THE FEDERAL LEVEL. MEETING IN CLOSED SESSIONS SINCE JANUARY, THE ASSEMBLY HAS MOVED RAPDILY THROUGH A SERIES OF POLITICAL COMPROMISES ALTERING IN VARIOUS WAYS THE DRAFT ORIGINALLY PRESENTED TO IT. KEY ISSUES REMAINING INCLUDE THE QUESTION OF STRONGER GUARANTEES OF PRESS FREEDOM AND WHETHER A FEDERAL SHARIA COURT OF APPEALS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO HANDLE APPEALS FROM ISLAMIC COURTS WHICH EXIST IN MANY OF THE STATES SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE WESTERN LEGAL SYSTEM.

AFTER THE CONSITUENT ASSEMBLY COMPLETES ITS WORK, THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ALLOW THE FORMAL RESUMPTION OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY WITH THE ORGANIXATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES FOLLOWED BY ELECTIONS TO STATE AND FEDERAL OFFICES PRIOR TO A FORMAL TRANSFER OF POWER IN OCTOBER 1979.

SO FAR THE LOW LEVEL OF POLITICKING AND THE RELATIVELY SECRET

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SUCCESSFUL COMPROMISE APPROACH TAKEN BY MEMBERS OF THE CONSITUENT ASSEMBLY SUGGEST THE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN RULE WILL BE RELATIVELY SMOOTH. IF INTEMPERATE CIVILIAN DEBATE AND POLITICAL MANEUVERING SHOULD DEVELOP, EITHER IN THE ASSEMBLY OR WITH THE ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, AND SERIOUSLY HEIGHTENED REGIONAL AND ETHNIC TENSIONS, THE MILITARY MIGHT INTERVENE TO CALM THE SITUATION. IT MIGHT STRETCH ITS TIMETABLE OR DECIDE THAT NIGERIA IS NOT YET READY FOR CIVILIAN RULE. EITHER EVENT WOULD CAUSE FRICTION WITH THE CIVILIAN ELITE WHICH IS EAGER FOR POWER.

5. SOUTHERN AFRICA: THIS PAPER SHOULD BE UPDATED AT THE LAST MINUTE TO REFLECT THE SITUATION AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT.

6. BEGIN SECRET. MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH NIGERIA:

A. PARA 2 SHOULD BE EDITED AS FOLLOWS: THE CH-47 REQUEST, ALTHOUGH CAUGHT UP IN THE FMG FINANCIAL CRUNCH AND ACTUAL PURCHASE WILL PROBABLY BE POSTPONED UNTIL 1980, REPRESENTS THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT.....

B. PARA 3 SHOULD BE EDITED AS FOLLOWS: ...MIGHT FUEL SUCH DESIGNS. NIGERIA HAS NOT YET FOUND A SATISFACTORY

WAY TO RAPIDLY REDUCE HER RELATIVELY LARGE MILITARY FORCE
TO MORE MANAGEABLE PROPORTIONS. HOWEVER, THE FMG IS
COMMITTED TO ACHIEVING THAT GOAL AND HAS DEVELOPED PLANS
TO DO SO. IT IS A SLOW PROCESS BECASUSE THE FMG IS
MINDFUL OF THE FACT THAT THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION'S
ANNOUNCED INTENTIONS TO DO THE SAME CONTRIBUTED TO THE
ATTEMPTED COUP IN FEBRUARY 1976. END SECRET.
EASUM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LAGOS03104
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780110-0014
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780379/aaaacoqw.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: dbc718c9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3361329
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BREIFING PAPERS FOR PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO NIGERIA
TAGS: OVIP, (CARTER, JIMMY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dbc718c9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014